

THE PROVINCIAL CONSERVATIVE PLATFORM,
(of Alberta.) A constructive and
progressive policy for the people.
Red Deer, News Print, 1912.

Alberta

The Provincial Conservative Platform



A CONSTRUCTIVE
AND PROGRESSIVE
POLICY FOR THE
PEOPLE

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA



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The Provincial Conservative Platform

The following is the Conservative Platform adopted originally in Convention at Red Deer Feb. 12 and 13, 1909, amended and re-adopted in Convention at Calgary on March 6th, 1912, with explanations and comment.

Railways

1. This convention pledges its earnest support to the immediate construction of railways in those portions of the province which do not now enjoy railway facilities, or where competition is imperative.

A. The construction and operation of such railways by the government of Alberta should be adopted with a view to the control of traffic rates for the benefit of the public, and, in such districts and directions as can best be served by company owned lines, such railways should be built with the aid of a guarantee of bonds to a reasonable amount by the provincial government, under such conditions as will insure their immediate construction, and will secure to the government control of traffic rates over the same, and the right to purchase them on fair and reasonable terms.

B. The supervision of construction of railways of which the bonds are guaranteed should be under the control of the government as to the actual cost and quality of the work.

C. The Provincial Government should retain an interest in all

townsites established along the lines of provincial railways.

While the Conservative party stands for the principle of public ownership and control of railways, the existing demand for railway extension throughout the province is so great that we do not believe the government alone could construct railways at all commensurate with the growing need for transportation.

The abnormal demand for railway facilities would therefore justify the government in giving a reasonable encouragement to the transcontinental systems operating in the province, requiring each to build branch lines which would be naturally tributary to their main lines, while the government could undertake the construction of lines throughout the province where most needed, and thus supply immediate railway facilities for those parts of the province which would not be supplied by the trunk line companies.

The following is a summary of the lines guaranteed and the amount of guarantees in 1909, all of which were to have been completed by the end of 1911:

Guaranteed by the Rutherford Government in 1909, all to have been completed by Dec. 31st, 1911:

Principal liability—

C.N.R., 940 miles, at \$13,000 per mile	\$11,960,000
G.T.P., 491 miles, at \$13,000 per mile	6,383,000
A. & G. W., 350 miles, at \$20,000 per mile	7,000,000

Total principal liability \$25,343,000

Interest liability—

30 years' interest on \$11,960,000 at 4 per cent.....	14,352,000
30 years' interest on \$6,383,000 at 4 per cent.....	7,659,600
50 years' interest on \$7,000,000 at 5 per cent.....	17,500,000

Total interest liability \$39,511,600

Principal liability \$25,343,000

Interest liability 39,511,000

Total liability \$64,854,600

Of the total mileage (1781) guaranteed by the Rutherford Government, only 270 have actually been completed. Of the 940 miles which the C.N.R. were to have completed by the end of 1911, only 207 miles have been actually completed.

The following is a table of the lines guaranteed by the Sifton Government during the recent session of 1911 and 1912:

Principal liability—

C.N.W.R., 250 miles, at \$20,000 per mile	\$5,000,000
C.N.W.R., 415 miles, at \$15,000 per mile	6,225,000
C.N.W.R., 590 miles, at \$13,000 per mile	6,370,000
G.T.P., 58 miles, at \$20,000 per mile	1,160,000
Edmonton, Dunvegan and B.C. line, 350 miles, at \$20,000 per mile	7,000,000

Total principal liability \$25,755,000

Interest liability—

30 years' interest on \$17,595,000 at 4 per cent.....	21,114,000
30 years' interest on \$1,160,000 at 4 per cent.....	1,392,000
20 years' interest on \$7,000,000 at 4 per cent.....	8,400,000

Total interest liability \$30,906,000

Principal liability 25,755,000

Interest liability 30,906,000

Total liability \$56,661,000

Summary—

Total provincial liability under Rutherford railway policy 64,854,600

Total provincial liability under Sifton railway policy 56,661,000

Grand total provincial liability \$121,515,600

The C.N.W.R. Company is a subsidiary company of the C.N.R., therefore by the above it is evident that the government are practically giving the C.N.R. a monopoly of railway construction without any reasonable expectation that they will be able to build any more than a small percentage of what they have undertaken, thus giving a false hope to the people of Alberta. 1405 miles out of a total of 1813 are guaranteed for the C.N.R. under this policy, in spite of the fact that the C. N. R. were only able to build 207 miles out of 940 which they agreed, three years ago, to build by the end of 1911. It doesn't look as though the people of the province were going to get very much actual railway construction.

With respect to the Edmonton, Dunvegan and British Columbia railway, this, to all appearances, is another promotion scheme very similar to the A. & G. W. deal. The mileage is the same, 350 miles; the guarantee is the same, \$20,000 per mile; no money is required as a guarantee of good faith; they are not required to equip or operate. It is under a Dominion charter over which the province has no control. No plans, profiles, or estimates were submitted to the Legislature.

Now the province has had one experience in dealing with an irresponsible railway company in the A. & G. W. deal which has brought disgrace and discredit to the province. Do the people of Alberta want another deal of the same kind in the face of that iniquitous contract? Do the people want another promotion scheme put through by the government?

When information was asked for regarding the promoters of this company, the only information which was given to the House was that J. D. McArthur was interested in the

company. However, so far as the records show in connection with the charter, the company is composed of two men who reside in Spokane, one in Winnipeg, one in Ottawa, and one in Edmonton, none of whom are known.

In connection with the proposal to guarantee the Edmonton, Dunvegan and British Columbia line for \$20,000 per mile, which impairs the credit of the province to the extent of \$7,000,000; the Conservative party claimed that such guarantees should not be put into effect before the agreement which the government proposed to enter into with the company, was submitted to the members of the House, as they were responsible to the people whom they represented for the impairment of the credit of the province to this enormous extent. **The Opposition moved that the agreement be submitted before the guarantee bill was passed. This motion was voted down by the supporters of the government.**

It will be remembered that in connection with the A. & G. W., the bad features were incorporated in the AGREEMENT which the government made with the company. Notwithstanding this fact, the government refused to give the representatives of the people any light upon the nature of the agreement which they proposed to make, and refused that information which the people's representatives ought to have had in order to vote intelligently upon such an important question, information to which they were in every way entitled.

The granting of charters and the giving of large guarantees will not alone bring needed railway facilities, for we cannot hope that the C.N.R. or the G.T.P. will do any very great amount of railway construction in

Alberta in the way of branch lines, so long as their transcontinental lines are not completed. The sooner the government wakes up to its responsibility to the people to supply the imperative need for immediate railway construction and operation of lines throughout the province where the existing companies will not immediately build the better.

Control of Liquor Traffic

2. This convention pledges the Conservative party to place the administration of the liquor license ordinance beyond the control of party politics, and also submit to the vote of the electors of the province the question of prohibiting the sale of and traffic in intoxicating liquors in the province, and to pass an act for the total prohibition of the liquor traffic in this province to the full extent of the provincial power in that respect, if upon the taking of such plebiscite sixty per cent. of the votes are cast in favor of such act.

The Conservative party stands for control of the liquor traffic by a commission which shall be independent of politics. The present system makes for all kinds of injustice and corruption.

The stand of the Conservative party is one that cannot fail to commend itself to every man who acknowledges the right of the people at large to decide this matter by means of a plebiscite, upon a sixty per cent. majority, which is fair to all concerned in the settlement of this question. It is not a question of prohibition; it is a question of the legitimate rights of the people to pronounce upon the control of this traffic.

Land Titles Office

3. This convention declares that the present Land Titles system, whereby the work is centralized in Edmonton and Calgary, is unfair to the residents of those sections of the two existing registration districts which are situate at any great distance from these respective cities, involving them, as it does, in great inconvenience, expense and delay in their land transactions. Wherefore this convention pledges the Conservative party to the establishment of such additional Land Titles Offices as will as far as possible remove this injustice.

Natural Resources

4. This convention reaffirms the position which the Conservative party has always taken upon this question, and condemns the withholding of the natural resources from the province at the time of the granting of autonomy and approves of the attitude of the Right Honorable R. L. Borden with regard to granting the natural resources to the province, and looks forward with pleasure to the time when the province shall ~~receive~~ full autonomous power in the administration of its natural resources.

The Conservative party stands for full and unimpaired control, by the province, of all the natural resources and public domain. The present administration stand for this important principle, but the difference is this, that the members of the present government have only recently been converted by force of circumstances. They are the party responsible for the fact that we do not own and control our resources and domain, for at the time of autonomy

they betrayed the province in this matter and consented to accept a cash subsidy in place of provincial rights. To this betrayal the Conservative party has never consented. Our position today is the same consistent position taken by both the Federal and the Provincial Conservatives on this matter in 1905. The repentance on the part of the Liberals is not so much a recognition that they were wrong in 1905, as it is an acknowledgment of the fact that their mismanagement of the government of the province has plunged us into such vast indebtedness as to make the possession of the resources imperative to save the financial standing of the province.

Many prominent Liberals at the time of autonomy were in favor of full provincial rights, but changed their views on this matter at the bidding of the Laurier Government and were rewarded by positions of prominence in the government of Alberta.

Liberal politicians have defended this deal, for which they alone were responsible, by every art known to eloquence and sophistry, and have twice been returned to power by electors whom they have deceived into accepting this settlement as the best for the province. It is now as plain to the people, as it was at that time plain to the Liberals referred to, that it was a serious injustice to the province and an advantage only to certain men who did the bidding of the Federal Liberal Government.

Figures show the extent of this deceit in its true proportions, for what these statesmen have defended as the best possible deal for the province has turned a steady stream of money into the Federal Treasury, while bringing to Alberta only the paltry sum of \$375,000 a year in lieu of the vast depletion of its lands.

Liberal mismanagement and extravagance have plunged the province of Alberta into such enormous indebtedness that the present income is wholly inadequate, therefore the present government have turned completely round on this important matter and now believe as ardently in provincial control and ownership, as aforetime they believed in the opposite doctrine.

The merits of the question are the same now as in 1905, when Liberals opposed it for the sake of reward and promotion to office. There is not another argument in favor of the principle, except it be the argument of provincial indebtedness, for which Liberals themselves are responsible. If the contentions of the Conservatives at the time of autonomy had been followed, we should today be a province with a large income, a splendid surplus, and not one cent of debt. Responsibility for the present conditions in the province lies at the door of the Liberal party and nowhere else, and they are now compelled to seek as a remedy what the Conservatives have advocated as a preventative, namely, control of the natural resources.

Perhaps the most serious principle involved in this change of Liberal policy in this important matter is the fact that, while they have been returned to power in two elections on the distinct policy that it was better for the province to accept a subsidy than to control the resources and domain, they have now changed to the opposite doctrine without the slightest reference to the electors who sent them to power. One would think that a change so radical as this would have necessitated an appeal to the people. Under British

Institutions such daring disregard for the rights of the people is singularly rare. It is a serious question for every elector in Alberta to consider, whether we are to be governed by the people and by duly accredited representatives, or by an autocracy of one man, who has never been endorsed by the people, and by representatives who support him and do not represent the people who sent them there.

Elevators

5. The inability of the railway companies to provide sufficient cars and motive power to move the grain crop of each year within a few months, is more apparent every year, and this evil will continue to grow so long as the tonnage offered increases in percentage faster than the equipment can reasonably be furnished by the railway companies.

Resolved: That this convention strongly urges the immediate construction by the Alberta Provincial Government of large interior storage elevators, at convenient central points, at distances not exceeding 200 miles apart, such elevators to be owned and operated by the Provincial Government at cost, and that this convention pledges the Conservative party to carry out such a policy.

It would appear to be part of the special mission of the Conservative party, not only to form policies which the Liberal party steal, without the courtesy of acknowledgment, but also to repair the country generally after the Liberal government has brought confusion and chaos into the affairs of the people. The present grain blockade is the joint result of negligence on the part of

the Federal Government and the same conduct on the part of the Provincial Government at home. The Federal Government have neglected the construction of both the G.T.P. and the Hudson Bay railways, while the provincial party at home have sat by and watched the C.N.R. construct 207 miles out of 940, and put in irregular operation 70 miles out of 940, which they were to complete by the 31st Dec., 1911, and to pay this same company far in advance of the work accomplished. This one fact, together with the total failure to build into the north, are the fruits of Liberal misrule and mismanagement, and are more to blame for car shortage and blockade of grain than any other conditions. That this is so is all the more firmly established by the brazen attempt of the Liberal opposition in Ottawa to prove it the fault of the Conservative Government, which had only been in office for four months when these conditions began to embarrass and oppress the farmers of the west. The Conservative party have therefore adopted as a plank in the party platform the immediate construction by the Government of Alberta of large Interior Elevators at convenient central points not more than 200 miles apart, owned and operated by the provincial government at cost.

It will be seen by every farmer in Alberta what an immense advantage this would be in the present circumstances, and it will be noted that the Conservative party would proceed to carry this out immediately if placed in power. A system of interior elevators would enable the farmer to store his grain and the banks would then advance him money on that basis, and many hardships incident to lack of storage and cars under present conditions would be done away with.

Demonstration Farms

6. Whereas the demonstration farms in the province of Alberta are in the nature of experimental farms and conflict with the work of the Dominion Government, and have been established and are now being operated at an unreasonable cost and practically defeat the purposes for which they have been established, and demonstrate to the settlers of this country that the cost of farming is beyond the means of the average settler:

THEREFORE be it resolved that this convention is in favor of the establishment of an agricultural college with a system of demonstration farming in connection therewith, to be established and operated on a basis that will demonstrate to the settlers of this country that farming can be carried on with a small capital on a paying basis.

The Demonstration farms of the Liberal Government have been a failure and a disappointment to the people of Alberta. Each of the five farms, it is admitted by the government, will have cost, when complete, the sum of over \$45,000.

One year ago last session the Minister of Agriculture received a grant of \$125,000 on the distinct understanding that this amount would be ample to purchase the necessary half section, erect the necessary buildings and equipment, and launch each farm as a self sustaining and profit-making proposition.

During the recent session, this same Minister of Agriculture, the Hon. Duncan Marshall, had the temerity to ask the House to vote him the additional sum of \$120,000 for the completion of these farms and \$25,000 for wages for these self-sustaining and paying institutions. Either the Minister deceived the

Legislature in connection with the first grant or he is amazingly deficient in good judgment and business ability.

The vote for the new grant of \$120,000 in the recent session, of course, passed, although there was a spectacular fight, which was kept up for hours by "His Majesty's Loyal Opposition," and witnessed from the speaker's gallery by the president and several distinguished members of the U.F.A. The Minister of Agriculture was kept on the defence during the entire time that the appropriations for his department were under consideration. The Minister of Agriculture did not deny that he had pledged his word of honor to purchase and equip these five farms and start them as paying institutions on the original grant of \$125,000. But the tame and spineless ranks of the Liberal party sustained the vote for these additional amounts. The cold fact, therefore, is that by the simple addition of \$120,000, voted during the recent session, to the original grant of \$125,000 and divided by five farms, we have a total cost per farm of over \$45,000.

It is difficult to see anything demonstrated by such a method of farming, except, as the member for Pincher Creek said, "It demonstrates how to put money into farming, instead of how to make money out of farming."

In view of the fact that most settlers come to this country with only a few hundred dollars, at most with a few thousands, it would seem to be a vastly better system for the government to demonstrate that the settler with but a small capital can make farming pay.

The average cost of buildings on the demonstration farms of the government is \$13,500. The impracticable basis on which these farms have been started is seen from this one fact. When the Minister of Agriculture was

taken to task for such an expenditure, he stated that there were many farmers in Alberta with as much as this invested in farm buildings. Mr. Hoadley suggested that he did not know where such a farmer could be found except possibly it might be in Ponoka. The scattered farm buildings of the average farmer and settler in this country are an offence to the fine taste of the Minister of Agriculture, he has so stated himself. His idea, therefore, is to spend \$13,500 on buildings alone on each of the demonstration farms of the government in order to show the poor settlers of this country what they ought to do, and how much better one fine barn with purebreds at \$250 each and stalls costing \$100 for each cow, is, than the miserable little buildings of which he feels so ashamed when he travels over the province, and which are all that most settlers have.

It is not too much to say that in the cool balanced judgment of the average farmer the present demonstration farm policy of the Liberal government is a joke and a byword.

The Conservative party stands for an Agricultural College of up-to-date character, with demonstration farming of the most practical kind in connection therewith.

Hail Insurance

7. Adequate hail insurance should be provided by the government, until an adequate scheme of co-operative hail insurance, satisfactory to the rural population of this province, is adopted and in operation.

The Liberal Government have gone out of the hail insurance business because of a small annual loss, and have substituted, instead of government insurance, the open door policy

with regard to this business, so that all companies approved by the Lt. Governor-in-Council can come into this province and exploit this business. Instead of the government losing by this line of business they propose that the farmers shall take all the chances with hail insurance companies, and if the farmers lose by reason of any of the companies defaulting, as they have done hitherto, why it is the farmers' lookout.

The deposit of these companies was at first set down in the government's draft bill as \$5000, but this was so absurdly small that it was raised to \$10,000, an amount still ridiculously inadequate. Under this arrangement it is still possible for an aggressive company to do a large amount of business, collect its premiums and leave its deposit to cover its default if the year should be a bad one and the losses heavy on account of hail.

A deputation of the U. F. A. waited on the Government in this connection, but received scant courtesy or encouragement, the Government persisting, for some special reason, in opening the door to all kinds of companies to engage in this business. A concession was however made to the farmers' suggestion, and a clause was inserted in the Rural Municipalities Bill permitting the formation of 19 rural municipalities into a hail insurance district for purposes of co-operative hail insurance under the management of the district so created. Seeing that the Act does not come into force for some time and that in any event the adoption of the rural municipalities form of government is optional with L. I. districts, and that rural municipalities will exist for many years side by side with L. I. districts, it will be a long time before the hail insurance provisions can be made to apply. All this the government knows quite well. This provision would have been a good one if the government had

adopted the further suggestion of the U.F.A., which is the policy of the Conservative party, namely, the continuance of the present government insurance at a loss until some adequate scheme of insurance could be put in operation to take its place.

Even if under this system there should be a loss to the government of \$100,000 a year it would be a mere pittance compared to the protection it would give the farmers, and inasmuch as the ultimate success and prosperity of the province from every standpoint must depend upon the success of the farm production, the government would be justified in providing for an annual loss if needs be, and it would be far more in the interests of all the people than the hundreds of thousands of dollars which they are putting into demonstration farms with comparatively abortive results. The loss on hail insurance would benefit the whole country while the money spent in demonstration farms is a benefit to but very few, and an extravagant investment of public money out of all proportion to the amount of good accomplished.

Highways and Drainage

S. This convention, recognizing that farm production is the basis of prosperity, advocates the expenditure of larger sums of money upon trunk roads and bridges to facilitate the marketing of farm products from the outlying settlements to the nearest market town, as well as upon a drainage scheme to facilitate road building and the drainage of farm areas.

\$200,000 a year has been the amount apportioned to this work for some years by the Government of Alberta. The present Premier has scoffed at spending any large amount of money

on roads, saying he did not believe in sinking money in mud holes. Everywhere in Alberta we see the signs of Liberal prodigality and lack of thrift. In the extravagant parliament buildings, likely to cost double the estimate, double that of the cost of Saskatchewan's handsome buildings, and more than double those of B.C., than which our buildings are no better. We see further signs of prolific spending in the bonding of railways in the interests of private parties; at unduly large amounts per mile, and for the benefit of people who have private interests to serve.

It may be convenient for the Liberal party to profess belief in such a sane and obvious matter as drainage and good roads, but if a tree is to be known by the kind of fruit it bears, which is an old fashioned rule not yet improved upon, then it is a faith which they have terribly slighted, and they have left us without any grounds whatever to believe that their future promises will be made good.

One million dollars extra is provided for this year by a loan, and while no definite information was given of how this was to be spent, it was inferred that it would mostly be spent upon a main highway from Athabasca Landing to the International boundary, which will do the outlying settlements very little good.

The Conservative party have for years stood for large expenditures in roads and bridges. This plank was adopted at the convention at Red Deer in 1909.

In British Columbia the Conservative Government have appropriated the magnificent sum of \$20,000,000 to be expended on the public roads during the next four years.

The Conservative party have been pledged for years, during which time the Liberal party have been doling out a miserable annual appropri-

tion, to a policy of the broadest kind with regard to roads, bridges, and drainage, and stand for this as one of the most insistent and urgent needs of all parts of the province today. Upon an adequate road policy the comfort and prosperity of immense numbers of settlers depends. The question of trunk roads, bridges and drainage is the most vital question in every progressive country and especially in a new province such as Alberta.

Initiative, Referendum and Recall

9. This convention approves of the introduction of the initiative or the power on the part of a specified percentage of the electors to originate legislation; and the referendum, or the referring to the popular vote of the initiative bills, or of bills passed by the legislature when such reference is petitioned for by a specified percentage of duly qualified electors; and the recall, or the power on the petition of a specified percentage of the duly qualified electors to bring about the holding of a new election in respect of an elective office.

The Conservative party stand pledged to the principle of Direct Legislation. While the Liberal party are shelving the question by a resolution to enquire into the matter, as though it were so very new that it must needs have long and careful consideration, it is to be noted that this marked advance in popular government has been a plank in the Conservative platform for a number of years and was adopted prior to the action taken in this direction by the U.F.A. It will thus be seen that the Conservative party is well abreast of the times, is progressive in spirit and believes that the people should govern according to the most ap-

proved and popular form of representative government.

Think of a government which has changed its principles so radically as has the Liberal Government on the question of natural resources, without any reference to the people whatever, and which has changed government and premiers in the middle of a term without a reference to the people—think of such a government introducing in the House a resolution to enquire into Direct Legislation. Such hypocrisy would be fit subject matter for laughter were it not so worthy of contempt. As evidence of sincerity in this matter on the part of the Liberal government, it must be borne in mind that the resolution to enquire into Direct Legislation was not introduced by the government, but by a private member, and not one member of the government put himself on record as in favor of the principle or spoke in its support. Every member on the Conservative side of the House spoke in favor of the resolution and also in favor of the principle. If we are to judge the future intention of the Liberal party in this matter by the past actions of the party, and by the principle according to which it retains office, there is little chance of this resolution proving anything else than a sop to farmers and a means of securing votes for a further lease of autocratic power.

The very best argument for the introduction of a measure of Direct Legislation in Alberta today is the fact that we have not representative government. The present government have never had an endorsement from the electorate. The present leader of the Government was chosen, not by the will of the people, but by the representative of the Crown. Nor has he apparently felt any responsibility to the people with respect to the vast accumulation of the provincial indebtedness or the enormous

impairment of the provincial credit in the guaranteeing of bonds of railway companies. Such a condition of affairs could not exist under Direct Legislation.

Meat Packing

10. This convention approves of the establishment of co-operative meat packing institutions.

The Liberal Government appointed a commission to investigate the pork packing industry as a government enterprise. The commission reported favorably, but the conditions laid upon the farmers were so extreme that they were not able to meet them. We believe that the government were justified in at least establishing a central pork packing plant to regulate the market for hogs so as to secure a more stable and profitable price, and thus obviate the danger of meat packing companies manipulating the price to their own interests.

Loans to Settlers

11. This convention pledges the Conservative party to the advocacy and support of legislation which will enable government aid to be granted towards the making of loans to settlers and workers at a low rate of interest, or legislation along the line of that enacted in this respect in Australia and New Zealand.

This is an important plank in the platform of the Conservative party. That it is entirely practicable is proved to a demonstration in the experience of Australia and New Zealand, both of which countries have shown commendable courage in undertaking the experiment, and have been rewarded by the most complete success.

That some such system would meet the needs of large numbers of the new settlers of this country is apparent on the face of it. Many a settler could be placed on his feet so as to accomplish the best possible results on his farm if there was a government fund available out of which he could procure a loan at a 5 per cent. rate of interest. The present government is lavish with expenditure in many directions less worthy and in connection with which the people are denied proper information. The Premier of the province when approached on this matter said it would hurt the banks and loan companies. Think of a government which prefers first to protect such institutions in their exorbitant earnings against the homesteader and the settler.

When, as has been the case during the past year, the government has been able to borrow money in the Old Country at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., there ought to be nothing to prevent it going into the loan business for the benefit of the settlers of the country, many of whom are too far removed from the centres of settlement to get a loan on any terms, and the rest of whom can only do so on such terms as make borrowing an undue interest hardship to the pioneers of this country.

If the Government impairs the credit of the province to the extent of over \$50,000,000 of principal for the guaranteeing of railway bonds, the profit of which goes largely out of the province, is it unreasonable to expect the government to create a sum of at least \$10,000,000 to supply the settler with cheap money wherever to improve and develop his land? We can conceive of nothing that would give a greater impetus to increased farm production and tend to make contented and prosperous settlers than such encourage-

agement and help on the part of the government.

The Provincial Conservative party is firmly pledged to the advocacy and support of legislation which would enable the government to make loans to farmers at a low rate of interest along the lines followed in Australia and New Zealand. The conditions under which money is loaned to the settler in this province bears heavy upon him. Not only must he pay from 8 to 10 per cent. interest, but the expense of placing a loan reduces the amount actually received to quite a large extent, and many settlers are so situated as not to be able to obtain a loan on any conditions at all. The government would be running no risks by adopting a system of loans to settlers, as the money would return to the government after fulfilling its mission of good and would be worth one hundred cents on the dollar, while the government would make one per cent., which, on \$10,000,000, would be \$100,000 to augment the provincial treasury.

Power Commission

12. Resolved, that in the opinion of this convention, it is advisable that the fullest possible information should be acquired through the medium of a commission, appointed for that purpose, as to the water power available throughout the province for the generation of electricity for municipal purposes.

Liberal governments, both Federal and Provincial, have made themselves notorious by giving away the resources of the country, and this would apply to water powers as well as to other sources of natural wealth. Even though it be late in the day, the Conservative party would favor the appointment of a power commis-

sion so that the people could know what is left in this direction for the use of the people at large. This is especially desirable in view of the certainty, under Conservative rule at Ottawa, of the restoration of the natural resources and the public domain to provincial control.

Telephone System

13. Resolved, that this convention recommends that the management of the government telephone system be taken from political control and placed in the hands of a commission, and that farmers who have government telephones in their houses be given free exchange with their market town.

A cardinal principle of all good government is that no department should in the slightest degree be used for political purposes. The present government have been guilty of the most flagrant prostitution of several branches of the public service to party ends. The telephone system has been one of these departments; the license department is another. W. J. Harmer has been charged on the floor of the House with being a political organizer and general political manipulator while holding the position of Assistant Superintendent of this department. The Premier, who should have been on his feet in an instant to deny these charges if they were untrue, sat glued to his chair, as did every other member on the government side of the House, and not one word was said in reply to this charge.

This same man was appointed the day following the creation of the Department of Railways and Telephones to the position of Deputy Minister of that Department, with the charges referred to still unanswered in any way. This is the

kind of thing which leads all governments into a condition of complete demoralization.

The Provincial Conservative party recommends that the management of the Government Telephone System be taken from political control and placed in the hands of a commission, and that the farmers who have government telephones in their houses be given free exchange to their market town.

New Zealand, Australia, Germany, Great Britain and the United States supply many examples of this. However, efficiency and profit can be obtained only through conducting such enterprises on strictly business principles. Politics must be eliminated from their management. But it is almost impossible to eliminate politics as long as these enterprises are under the direction of a party government. Too often the effort of a government is to hold office at all costs. When this becomes its purpose the public servant is converted into a body of party workers, and party service rather than special ability for the duties of the department becomes the chief recommendation for preferment.

This explains the failure to conduct efficiently such enterprises as the Intercolonial Railway and Government Hail Insurance.

Education

14. That in the light of the rapid general development in education and educational methods, particularly in reference to agricultural, commercial and industrial life, this convention is of the opinion that a comprehensive educational policy should be entered upon in Alberta. To this end a commission should be appointed with large powers to study conditions of education.

That a minister should be appoint-

ed whose sole duty is to attend to the Educational Dept. That a thorough re-organization of the Education Department, its policy and administration, be undertaken by the Government on a basis of the report of such commission, having in view the best conditions and consequences in the educational world of today.

The Education Department of the Government appears entirely inadequate to cope with the fast development of the province in regard to its schools. Loss to children in many parts of the prairie is such that it is improbable that it can ever be overtaken later on in life. The settlement of school sites in cases of dispute is notoriously slow, and this is a serious matter to large numbers of children whose whole course of life is likely to be seriously and permanently altered as the result of lost educational opportunities, for which the Department of Education is directly responsible.

The Conservative party stands for the most thoroughly up-to-date system of education, especially with regard to such important matters as agriculture, industry and commerce. It also stands for the appointment of a commission to study conditions; the report of this commission to be the basis of a complete re-organization of the Educational Department and of the educational policy of the government.

We believe that this department of the government is of such importance that it should receive not merely the divided attention of a Minister, who is also holding down other departments, but should receive the full and undivided attention of a Minister gifted with a wide vision and a high sense of the destiny of thousands of the young people of Alberta which is committed to his care.

Labor Legislation

15. Resolved that labor legislation should be enacted, aiming at a higher standard of comfort and living for the workers, and altering or adding to the following act as follows:—

The Coal Mining Act

A. The appointment of an independent commission, with equal representation for mine operators and mine workers, for the purpose of investigating fully into the conditions relating to mines in this province and the enactment of legislation based on the advice of the commission.

Workmens' Compensation Act

B. And this convention pledges itself to the thorough revision of the Workmens' Compensation Act so as to secure adequate protection, both to the workman and the employer.

The Conservative party stands for legislation aiming at a higher standard of comfort for workers of all kinds, and especially believes that a commission should be appointed, equally representative of the mine operators and the mine workers, for the purpose of full investigation into conditions existing in connection with the mining industry of the province, legislation to be enacted based on the findings of such commission.

The Conservative party also stands pledged to the thorough revision of the Workmens' Compensation Act so that it may afford to the workers and employers alike a fuller measure of protection.

Fortnightly Payment of Miners' Wages

This matter has several times been brought before the Legislature, but

in such a broad and general manner as not to receive support from either side of the House. It is obvious, however, that from the general demand in the mining districts of the province for the passing of some such measure, it ought to be passed without delay, and the Conservative party are in favor of such action being taken.

Night Schools and Technical Colleges for Workers

This is a matter which has the hearty sympathy and support of the Conservative party.

Civil Service Reform

16. Resolved that this convention is of the opinion that a thorough and complete reformation of the laws relating to civil service should be made, so that future appointments shall be made upon the report of examiners after competitive examination.

The need for reform in this direction becomes more and more apparent as the government in office make increasing use of the power of appointment from the highest positions down to commissioners for taking affidavits, on a political basis. Hitherto almost every appointment has been made with a view to the strengthening of the Liberal machine, until today we are in the grip of machine conditions as bad in their way as those of Tammany. It is notorious the way in which the liquor license administration has been used as a political lever. The Conservative party believes that reform is imperative in the manner of making all civil service appointments.